

# Policy of the University of the Free State on Naming and Renaming

*This document replaces the previous Naming Policy of the University first approved on 29 November 1999 and subsequently amended by the Council on 7 March 2003. This policy document represents a significantly different approach to the previous document. It therefore carries both a different title and is recast entirely. In particular there is an increasing need to ensure that the act of naming creates a sense of inclusivity. This policy seeks to achieve this and needs to be read in conjunction with the Remit of the Naming Committee.*

## 1. Background

The University of the Free State (UFS) traces its origins to 1904 and exists by virtue of the Institutional Statute (No 747 promulgated in 2010) in terms of the Higher Education Act (No 101 of 1997).

The University is a public institution. It is obligated by legislation to put effective policies and control measures in place in order to ensure good management. In addition, the Council and management must seek to ensure that good corporate management is practised. It also intends to implement best practice, as recommended in the King III Guidelines on best practices and good governance, as far as this is practicable.

The UFS honours individuals or organisations that have made either a significant contribution to the University, the community or country, or to Higher Education more generally. This is done in various ways including honorary degrees and medals but also through naming. Details of these other forms of recognition are contained in separate documents.

Naming rights are also a unique way in which private support to the University can be publicly recognised and through which those who support the University financially can best be acknowledged for this contribution. When the contribution to be recognised is not financial naming may also be approved to honour a non-material contribution. Given that there are a limited number of naming opportunities at the University and that any one naming opportunity may well be in place for an extended period of time it is the position of the University that naming rights should, wherever possible, be aimed at acknowledging significant advancement support.

Naming rights can be bestowed on a range of assets, including:

- University facilities such as streets, spaces, buildings and other structures
- Academic Chairs or professorships or other academic positions
- Academic events such as lecture or seminar series
- Academic or research entities such as Centres or Institutes.

Decisions about –

- naming a newly constructed building, or
- renaming a building when it is renovated
- naming an academic Chair when it is established
- naming when initiating lecture or seminar series, or renaming an existing one

are taken (and defended) on the basis of this policy and its guiding principles.

No commitment to naming should be given to any proposed sponsor until Council has approved the name or new name.

## **2. Guiding principles**

The new policy on naming draws on the values embedded in the UFS Strategic Plan which was adopted by Council in 2012. The practice of naming and renaming would therefore draw on the following principles:

- 2.1. Transformation – a commitment to pursue justice, equality and redress in a changing country and a transforming university;
- 2.2. Reconciliation – a commitment to inclusion, recognition and embrace so that all cultures, beliefs and traditions are constantly recognized;
- 2.3. Excellence – a commitment to the highest standards of academic and human achievement;
- 2.4. Distinctiveness – a commitment to the unique history, economy, culture and geography of the university while still recognising the national character and international ambitions of the university;
- 2.5. Leadership – a commitment to recognizing outstanding leaders and leadership across all segments of society;
- 2.6. Comprehensiveness – a commitment to transformation in all dimensions of institutional life including streets, buildings and other special sites;
- 2.7. Balance and sensitivity – a commitment to making bold decisions and yet being sensitive and respectful in pursuing change through education and consultation across a broad band of stakeholder groups.

## **3. Policy**

The University is committed to the creation of a higher education institution that reflects the characteristics that give effect to the guiding principles of its vision and mission. It recognizes that the names bestowed on its assets must sustain a harmonious balance between its origins, the rich history and heritage of the UFS, and the constitutionally democratic society it is designed to serve. It is also committed to the renaming of assets where an existing name is deemed to disturb the inclusive focus of the University. The names bestowed by the UFS seek to celebrate our location and standing within the Free State Province, South Africa and the African continent. The Council has the right to revoke any decision about naming or renaming.

#### 4. Implementation of the policy

The NC is responsible for the implementation of this policy and its procedures.

- ◆ In the process of considering its recommendations, the NC may choose to seek comments from the Institutional Forum regarding proposed names before finalising its proposals.
- ◆ Its recommendations are submitted to the Rectorate for endorsement and recommendation to the University Management Committee (UMC).
- ◆ If the UMC is of the opinion that the proposal aligns with the intent of this document, the matter is recommended to Council.
- ◆ In the case of proposals regarding academic entities, the UMC will forward its recommendations via Senate for its advice to Council, before it is considered by the Council.
- ◆ Where a naming proposal is associated with an asset aimed at enhancing the extra-curricular experience of students, the UMC will similarly refer it to the Central Students Representative Council for its advice to Council, before it serves before Council.

The following points represent the factors that the NC considers in carrying out its remit:

- 4.1. The naming of a University asset seeks to honour an individual or an organisation where such individual or organisation has made a gift or contribution to the University that is considered by the NC to warrant such permanent acknowledgement. The contribution of any material gift to the University does not automatically bestow on the donor the right to have any University asset named after the donor. Where the development would not have been possible without the donor, the minimum recognition takes the form of a permanent plaque marking the donation and this may, if considered appropriate, be supplemented by naming rights of one form or another.
- 4.2. Naming should contribute to the promotion of unity on the campus. Names that may promote disharmony are not considered and, in the consideration of names, the longer term values and associations - especially associated with individuals - are taken into account. Should there be a material change in the nature of the associations generally made with a particular name the NC must consider appeals to have the naming rights renegotiated – no unilateral changes of names will be made but the University reserves the right to negotiate with contributors, or if they are deceased, with the trustees of their estates, to change names if this is deemed to be in the best interests of the University. The NC must consider the possibility of offence or disharmony resulting from a particular name.
- 4.3. No naming right should be given in perpetuity in respect of a donation, but the period, for which naming rights will hold, and the conditions under which it is to be reconsidered, is to be determined at the time that the naming right is bestowed and must be built into any agreement with the contributor. This agreement must also stipulate the right of the Council to revoke any naming resolution.

- 4.4. Donors who are honoured through being given naming rights are not permitted to dictate the naming of any adjacent, similar or any other asset.
- 4.5. A naming right is directly proportional to the contribution of the person or organisation – thus an entire building should not be proposed for this honour if the contribution only enabled the refurbishment of one lecture theatre. Clearly, it is in the University's interests to name assets of appropriate proportion to the support being recognised.
- 4.6. Where an asset that will eventually require renewal is named after an individual or organisation the agreement should stipulate the period of the naming and the time frame and conditions under which the name could be reviewed as and when necessary. For instance, the donor may be given a first option after ten years to assist with renovation of a lecture theatre, failing which the naming right may lapse if an alternative donor is willing to renovate the space. The original donor is recognised in perpetuity with at least a plaque if this occurs.

## **5. Purpose of the policy**

The authority for naming is vested in the Council of the University. This document seeks to ensure that naming and renaming occurs with sensitivity, appropriate confidentiality and adequate consultation, prior to decisions by Council.

## **6. Scope**

This policy applies to all of the University's assets on all of its campuses.

## **7. Resource consequences of the policy**

There is cost associated with the naming and renaming of assets. When proposals are approved the timing and the implementation of decisions must be based on the available operational budgets of those required to give effect to them. This entails the cost and form of the consequential signage or plaques and any related formal function.

## **8. Review procedure**

A review, of the efficacy and efficiency of the University in implementing this policy, will be conducted at the end of the fourth year of each cycle of five years for which it has been approved. This will facilitate adaptations for consideration and approval by Council during the fifth year for implementation in the next cycle.

**9. POLICY RECORD**

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Related documents Verwante dokumente	Remit of the Naming Committee of the UFS Policies regarding naming of academic positions, entities, or events. Reglement van die Naamgewingskomitee van die UV. Beleide oor die vernoeming van akademiese posisies, entiteite of geleenthede.

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- *Policy on Naming and Renaming buildings, facilities and academic units and structures*, Rhodes University, January 2010
- *Naming Policy*, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2009
- *Policy on the Naming of Facilities*, Central University of Technology, (draft 2012)

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